

Story 1787 (1994 Tape 6)

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The Laz¹ Telephone Conversationalist

There was once a Laz who had recently become quite rich. He had had a telephone installed in his house. He did not really need a telephone. He wanted it in order to impress visitors

When a visitor would come to his home, the Laz would run to answer the telephone, even though it had not rung. Then he would pretend to be talking to someone. "Hello! What did you say? Say it again." Then after a pause, he would ask, "What is it that you want? I do not understand you." Finally, since there was not really anyone on the other end of the line, he would conclude the conversation by saying, "I see! I see! Well, if you have nothing more to say, good-bye!"

¹The word Laz referred originally to an ethnic minority living primarily in Trabzon and Rize provinces, along the extreme eastern part of the Turkish Black Sea coast. More recently the word has come to be applied to any resident of the entire Turkish Black Sea coast. In the Turkish oral tradition Laz people are stereotyped as being stupid or inept. This stereotype (like most others) is unjustifiable, for Lazes are, of course, much like other people.